Federal Charges False, N.O. Antiwar Vet Declares

A New Orleans man and two other members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War have been released on $25,000 bond each from a Tallahassee, Fla., prison where they were under indictment on charges of conspiring to disrupt the Republican National Convention.

Peter P. Mahoney, 23, a student at LSUNO and one of six national coordinators for VVAW, said today the government's charges "that we were going to violently disrupt the Republican convention with automatic weapons, firebombs, marbles, and slingshots, is completely false and reads like a comic routine.

"It would be funny if it weren't for the fact that people may go to jail as the result."

THE $75,000 bond was raised by concerned citizens, many from Tallahassee, according to Mike Oliver of VVAW, who presented the money yesterday to secure the trio's release.

Also released were Scott Camil, 25, of Gainesville, and John Kniffin, 32, of Austin, Tex.

Oliver and Mahoney both said the number of people who immediately responded to the call for bonding money shows the widespread support the group has.

The three will go on trial with three other members of VVAW in Gainesville, where a federal grand jury indictment said the conspiracy was hatched. No date has been set for the trial. Until then, they are restricted to the northern district of Florida, preventing them from going to Miami for the convention.

Mahoney admitted that as a national coordinator he had met with the southern regional leaders of VVAW in May as claimed in the indictment. "We never discussed the Republican convention at the meeting," he said.

HE SAID that they did discuss plans for the Democratic convention, "but the plans for the Republican convention were to be made on the national level."

"There was an agent of the FBI at our meeting," he said. "At the end he stood up and identified himself as Bill Lemmer, a government agent."

"Lemmer's testimony in front of the grand jury was a pack of lies," Mahoney continued. "If he is all the government has to back up their case, we will have no trouble.

"They will have no case at all. We have psychiatrists who will go on the stand and say that Lemmer is mentally unstable."

Mahoney said he will cooperate fully with police "We want to go to court to prove this thing is a farce. We are making motions now to let us leave northern Florida."

During the Democratic convention, 24 people were subpoenaed. Of these, six were indicted. Mahoney said he feels this is part of a large effort by the Nixon administration

"This is coming from very high up to squelch us," he declared. "It is being directed by Guy Goodwin of the Justice Department Internal Security Division."

"IT IS AN obvious attempt to keep us from making our views known and to provoke us to violence," he said. "They want to deprive us of our leadership, but it won't work. People have come to respect us as a reputable group."

Mahoney decided to make New Orleans his home during a visit in 1967. He served in the Army from 1968-1971 and enrolled at LSUNO upon his return.

Last year he was made a regional coordinator for Louisiana for VVAW, and last April was elected a national coordinator.

He plans to return to New Orleans as soon as possible, and hopes to resume studies at LSUNO next spring when he finishes in New York as a national coordinator.